

AAAC Newsletter

African American Advisory Council • Spring 2016

23rd Annual African American Advisory Council Institute

BREAKING BARRIERS

Addressing Challenges to Permanency for
African American Youth in Substitute Care



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George H. Sheldon

DCFS Director

From the Chairman

Addressing Challenges to Permanency for African American Youth in Substitute Care

I hope that everyone have a healthy and wonderful new year. This is a time of reflection on the previous year while preparing for the year ahead. The African American



Chairman Michael D. Burns

Advisory Council (AAAC) is beginning 2016 by publishing this newsletter in honor of Black History Month and to provide a synopsis of the Council's activities during 2015. Much of 2015 centered on yet another change in leadership for the Department. I met with Director Sheldon shortly after his arrival to inform him about the AAAC. It was a pleasure

to meet him. I found him to be very supportive and respectful of the Department advisory groups. He has been very open to meeting with the Council and sharing the direction he has for the Department. He expressed a desire to have input from the AAAC in areas of concern in terms of programs, services, staff related issues and most importantly the plight of children in care. The council was really pleased to hear the Director emphasize the value of having input from former youth in care.

Recognizing the huge task at hand with Director Sheldon, we understood that it would take some time for him to guide the Department in the direction that he outlined for the Council. He was presented with the reports from each of the Regional Dialogues that were held by the Council in 2014. Some of the main issues that were basically identified in each of the Regions pertained to foster home recruitment/training, more and better resources, the complexity in serving a mixed population of abused and neglected youth with those from delinquency, and improvement in the hiring process to maintain sufficient staffing levels. Again we understand that these issues will require some time to see progress in getting them addressed. However, Director Sheldon spoke about securing contracts for therapeutic foster homes to service youth exiting residential treatment facilities and providing intensive services to youth that have significant trauma experiences. He talked about the need to have more community based resources and that he was bringing a person on board to lead that

effort. He also mentioned that some of the issues may be in alignment with concerns identified by the B. H. Consent Decree Expert Panel. Additionally he spoke of the Strategic Planning Division taking a highly comprehensive analysis of the Department and some of the Dialogue issues may be addressed through the function of that Division. The council would like to congratulate Director Sheldon on his appointment and we look forward to continuing our dialogue and collaboration on protecting the children while supporting and strengthening families.

When we began to plan for our annual conference in conjunction with the Permanency Enhancement Project University Partners, we were informed by Training that the Department was not supporting any conferences for 2015. The council decided that it was important to continue with the conference as we felt that the information provided over the years has been essential in how to best interact and service African American children and families. Therefore we held the conference on a Saturday in order to not be in conflict with the policy we had been given. We sincerely appreciate everyone that attended, the presenters, Keynote Speaker, David (Dee 1) Augustine, Brooke Taylor and Training, Governors State University for hosting the event, DCFS Office of Communications, vendors and the Chicago Association of Black Social Workers. Everyone listed here played a vital role in making the Institute informative and successful. I especially want to recognize Dr. Venessa Brown of Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, Angela Baron Jeffery and Sabrina Tatum of Northern Illinois University and Dr. Doris Houston from Illinois State University for their continued partnership and support. As usual, our conference planning committee under the leadership of co-chairs Robin Albritton and Tracy Marshall did an outstanding job making the 23rd Annual a success on a Saturday. I also want to recognize Humberto Tijerina, Office of Communications, for his outstanding design and layout for all printing material. He has been great for the Council with his work on several projects in recent years. You can read more about the Institute in this edition and please visit www.permanencyenhancementproject.org to see videos and photos. We urge you to share the information with those that we service, private agencies and of course staff. We thank Chris Hamb for the videos and Council member Shirley Davis-Barsh for the photos.

Lastly, council member and Recruitment/Resource Manager, Jataun Rollins served as a committee chair for an event held on August 21, 15 for African American young

From the Chairman *(continued)*

men involved with DCFS. The title was “Man Talk”. Dr. Obari Cartman led a phenomenal dialogue with the youth on real life issues that adolescence of today encounter on a regular basis. Council member Dr. Anthony Grady did an outstanding job in addressing the young men. Thanks to each of the volunteers from various units in the Cook area for helping to put on the affair. The Council plans to have this event again this year.

We look forward to gathering information from Black History Month programs and projects for 2016 that we will certainly cover in our next newsletter.

Peace,



Michael Burns,
Chairman AAAC

Reflections from the AAAC Institute Co-Chairs Robin Albritton and Tracy Marshall

In spite of all odds the Twenty-Third African American Institute was a tremendous success. The challenges we faced could have easily derailed the planning process. However, we had an urgent message that we needed to deliver to our youth and we did just that.... It began with the theme, **BREAKING BARRIERS: Addressing Challenges to Permanency for African American Youth in Substitute Care**. Then our vibrant keynote speaker, Mr. David “Dee I” Augustine’s speech ignited enthusiasm and gave insight on ways to help young people embrace their individuality and not run from it. The workshop presenters were motivated, inspiring and very knowledgeable about their work. They set the tone for participants to have genuine dialogue; share experiences and discover additional ways to support children and families break down barriers.

One of the highlights of the Institute was the Mega Roundtable Forum. The panelist discussed various ways to help youth overcome obstacles



Tracy Marshall and Robin Albritton

and engage in relationships that will nurture healthy development and personal achievement. The discussion was thought provoking and emphasized the fact that the child welfare system is much larger and much more complexed than just DCFS. Moving forward, they challenged us to work in collaboration and not in silos.

We would be remiss if we did not express our sincere appreciation to Governors State University (GSU) for hosting this event. We are also thankful for the partnership between

DCFS, Northern Illinois University (NIU) and Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville (SIUE), without it, this event would not have been possible. Thanks to the planning committee and the entire African American Advisory Council for their dedication and commitment to making the Institute Day a reality. We acknowledge and thank our Chairman, Mike Burns, for his tenacity and unwavering spirit to see what others cannot and to do what others will not.

Overall, there were many progressive illustrations regarding DCFS current practices and how they are evolving. Hopefully, we provided participants an opportunity to learn strategies, as well as gain some insight into what is on the horizon for the Department and our communities.

Warm Regards,

AAAC Conference Chairs

Men Talk by Dr. Anthony Grady

Men Talk was a dynamic dialogue between young men about the day to day struggles of being Young and Black. It brought to life many of the issues that plague African American Males on inner city streets, while offering teachable moments as to see if these young men understand what they see, hear, and do. In speaking with these young men it was very clear that they at times were unable to express and address some topics, because of peer association, the inability to speak openly, fear of rejection, and limited mobility to exposure of things going on outside of their normal living area.

The host Dr. Anthony Grady and our keynote Speaker Dr. Obari Cartman challenged the young men to explore more deeply as to why the issues exist among us. It is very clear no matter the skin color many of the issues are the same. It was important to notice that many of the young men have a true issue with conflict resolution. Meaning they feel they have to battle in order to get respect or resolve their issues. It was brought out that if we process and evaluate what our role



Dr. Anthony Grady

is, many times we can honestly walk away from the confrontations. It was loud and clear that these young men want a chance at life and if given the opportunity they felt they would do well.

In closing, Men Talk not only brought about great conversation and opened boundaries, it provided some teachable moments, and offered answers from those that live in some of the war torn streets of our ghettos, hoods, and communities daily. It allowed these young men to have a voice. As we look forward to the next event of Men TALK Part II, the hope is that when we look around the room the same vision of seeing a room full of young men accompanied by a room full of women will be very different in that there will be more males acting as mentors, chaperones, big brothers and fathers to these young men. It was a great start to many more conversations about respecting self, women, life, music, and longevity to be great.



Recruitment Buzz



*By Jataun J. Rollins, SPSA
Associate Deputy Director of
Community Resources*

Although the Department has thousands of homes on the rolls, the utilization of foster homes across the state of Illinois is lacking in a number of areas. Most impacted and hardest to place are African American adolescent males. This population of youth requires more placements out of detention, residential, hospitals, placement disruptions, et cetera. The Department is embarking upon a media campaign to create awareness of the value of our young men and to quell fears in providing them a home in which people genuinely care about them and desire to help them accomplish their goals. If their home is not the first option, we as the Department need to garner the support of the child, parent, family/kin, foster parent, child protection, permanency staff, administrators, ancillary and specialty services to collaborate at the outset of placement and make it work for the sake of the child's well-being and sense of safety.

Presently, Emergency Foster Care (EFC) is preparing for a launch on July 1, 2016 in an effort to move away from shift care for youth providing them a home environment. Emergency foster care is time limited and is an absolute last resort for child welfare staff to utilize. The clear message from the Department is that we intend to return children home, find a relative or fictive kin option first before placing in a substitute environment. The degree of trauma children experience in multiple placements, cultural shifts completely different from their own, loss of friends and things familiar to them like their community, school and families are very impactful and can leave an imprint that can last a lifetime. Foster parents are being screened for their qualifications to foster on an emergent basis and each youth will be assessed for his or her appropriateness to be in a home environment.

While recruitment efforts are underway for African American teens, there are also efforts being made to ensure there are LGBTQ friendly homes, Burgos homes and

homes to meet children's special needs. Therapeutic Foster Care is also underway in partnership with three private agencies that are currently recruiting and planning to provide evidence based approaches to help youth and families transition out of care with the Department with the necessary resources to manage their lives without child welfare interventions.

It is clear that the best recruiters are you the reader who may know an awesome couple or individual, who has a knack for working with adolescents, has resources and connections to people that will aid them in fostering. Our youth have a right to a good home and all the tools they need to help them be productive members of society as they mature. Please reach out to the Statewide Recruitment Administrator,

Twana Cosey
twana.cosey@illinois.gov
or **312.808.5000**.

Interview with Jacqui Colyer DCFS Cook County New Regional Administrator

By James Robinson

Mrs. Jacqui Colyer is the new Regional Administrator for Cook County. Ms. Colyer is an experienced social worker who has practiced in her chosen field for a number of years. For the past ten years she has worked mostly in Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice. She has also performed a number of duties in the area of Prevention Services. When asked about her work with Juvenile Justice, she offered the following anecdote. She and her husband, who worked in Juvenile Probation, adopted a young man who was on her husband's caseload. Per Jacqui, and this is an exact quote, "He was a hot mess." The young man was a chronic runner from detention centers and would run to their house. Jacqui stated that the young man suggested to a judge (when questioned about placement options) that he be placed with his probation officer. He stated that this would be a good placement for him and that if placed with Jacqui and her husband, he would cease his running away behaviors and join the Job Corps in a couple of years. According to Jacqui the youth was fourteen years old at the time he was placed into her home. The young man managed to turn his life around but did not join Job Corps as promised. Instead, he graduated from high school and went on to attend the University of Miami where he starred in football.

Jacqui stated that part of the reason that she agreed to accept the position as Cook's Regional Administrator, was to be close to her grandson. When asked about what she thought about Chicago? She stated that she loves Chicago as a city and Chicago's people are very friendly. Jacqui mentioned that she has another grandson in Miami but he has a lot of family and support in Miami whereas her grandson here does not.

When asked about her background she stated that she was born in Charleston, South Carolina and her family moved to Miami when she was very



Jacqui Colyer

young. She stated that she attended Winthrop University, where she had a double major in Education and Social Work. Jacqui achieved her Masters in Social Work from Barry University at Miami. Jacqui worked on her dissertation for her doctorate in educational leadership at the University of Miami.

When asked about her favorite job, Jacqui replied that her favorite job is her current position. When asked why, she stated that she has a passion for children and families. She also remarked that she sees Cook

County staff as being hard working and dedicated workers. However, she indicated that she would like to see the various Cook County sites become more collaborative.

Jacqui reported having a similar position in Miami. Her title was Regional Director. In addition to child protection she also was over Child Welfare, Adult Protection, the Food Stamp program, Child Care Licensing and a little known program for immigrants who left the United States to return to their home countries. She stated that this program provided them with financial assistance.

Jacqui was asked what she perceived as a major challenge or challenges in her new role. She replied that one challenge is convincing her colleagues to take the next step. She explained that at one time Illinois was the leader in Child Welfare. She believes that we are moving in the right direction to improve our practice. Jacqui gave an example that Florida was once considered the worst state in Child Welfare but eventually improved to being the third best state. Jacqui's mission, as well as Director Sheldon's, is to develop policies and procedures which will foster improved permanency outcomes for our families and restore the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services to its top Child Welfare status in the nation.

Interview with Dr. Ruby Powell DCFS Cook Central Area Administrator

By James Robinson

Dr. Ruby Powell is the current Area Administrator at the 1026 S. Damen office. Dr. Powell is the Cook Region Central Area Administrator (A.A.) for DCP teams at both the 1026 and Child Advocacy Center (CAC). Mrs. Powell has been in this position for the past 7 months. Prior to this position Dr. Powell, whom I have the privilege to call Ruby, worked for the Department of Human Services (DHS). While at DHS she served as the Assistant Local Office Administrator for the Medicaid Call Center and prior to this position she was the Director of Staff Development and Training at Tinley Park Mental Health Center. Ruby also previously worked for DCFS for eighteen years. During those years she served as a Child Welfare Specialist, Child Protection Investigator, Child Protection Supervisor, Child Protection Manager and Lead Trainer for the Training Division.

Ruby is married with four children and a host of God children. Ruby recently received a Doctorate in Educational Leadership Curriculum Development. Ruby also has a master in Psychology Guidance and Counseling from Chicago State University. Ruby enjoys spending leisure time reading, writing, bowling and spending quality time with her family. When asked about other activities that she is involved in, Ruby stated that she is involved with Wives United in Prayer, which is a group of wives that are dedicated



to praying for their husbands and families. This group is also involved in community services. Ruby is also the founder of an organization for single mothers, which is called Oasis Empowerment Zone. Ruby stated that this group helps single mothers to refocus on accomplishing their goals and dreams. Currently, Ruby stated that there are eight active single mothers in the group and at times there have been as many as twenty-five mothers. Ruby stated that one of her goals for Oasis next year is to host

quarterly workshops that address the needs of moms and beginning in January she will start publishing a newsletter entitled, The Oasis Connection. In addition to these activities Ruby also finds time to work with college students as a member of the DBW scholarship commission, which is named after its founder Donnella Bishop-Ward. This interviewer asked Ruby how is she able to manage it all? Ruby replied that her family recognizes her passion for helping people and lends their support. When asked what does she like best about her current position, she responded that what she likes most, is being able to work with staff to become an effective agent of change. In closing, I asked Ruby what would be her ideal job? She replied that her dream is to develop Oasis into a full service social service agency.

Someone You Should Know: Arlecia Brown Cook South Education Advisor

By Bremen Campbell

Arlecia Brown is the Education Advisor for Cook South and the southern suburbs. Her main job duties include being an advocate for the educational concerns and needs of DCFS children. Although DCFS Policy and Rule 315 govern her day to day work, her charge is ensuring that city, county, state and federal policies are being adhered to as well. She is responsible for ensuring that all involved parties are working towards successful educational outcomes. Ms. Brown trains staff on educational policies, assists with the planning of IEP staffings, and is a consultant to DCFS staff in all education matters.

Ms. Brown is a product of the Chicago Englewood community. She developed a passion for Special Education due to observing bullying and discrimination against disabled students while growing up. Her mother was the first African American principal at an area Catholic school. Ms. Brown attended Spellman College where she received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology with a Math minor. She initially worked at Georgia State University Law School where she performed research duties for professors.



Ms. Brown returned to Chicago in 2004 and worked at Hyde Park Academy where she had attended high school. She taught Algebra for one year. In 2005, she was hired by Northern Illinois University Center for Child Welfare and Education as an Assistant Education Advisor. She received her Master of Education in 2010 and was promoted to her current position.

Ms. Brown is very active in the community. She is a minister who co-laborers with a Christian organization for over seven years. Ms. Brown cited many success stories in her career. She told of one DCFS ward who became pregnant as a freshman. Ms. Brown worked closely with the youth through the years to assist her with graduating from high school and attending college.

Ms. Brown believes that, “A child is a special little person who needs a big person to help guide them on the path of life.”

Cook South staff can contact Ms. Brown at the DCFS Emerald Field Office.

Southern Region Staff Advocate for Sickle Cell Education

*By Vendetta Dennis,
Southern Region Area Administrator*

September is Sickle Cell Disease Awareness Month. Several Southern Region African American staff participated in a 5K run held on September 19, 2015 in Alton, Illinois. That experience piqued their interest and other African American staff to examine the impact this disease has on our African American wards in this region. Sickle Cell Disease is a genetic condition that is present at birth. A child can only have Sickle Cell Disease when both of his /her parents have at least one abnormal beta-globin gene. 1 in 12 African Americans born in the US have the

Sickle Cell Trait. Having the trait simply means that a person carries a single gene for the disease and can pass this gene along to their children. People with the trait are generally asymptomatic and live a normal life.

Since 2006 all infants born in the US should have had a newborn screening and should be a part of his/her medical record including Sickle Cell status. In 2010, the state of Illinois had 3,056 infants born with positive Sickle Cell Trait screens representing 17.3 incidents per 1000 infants screened. We have several African American youth in care that were born prior to the establishment of the infant screens and have begun

a project to make a determination of the numbers, subsequent testing, and education that has been provided. Once information has been gathered, efforts will be made to follow-up with the Sickle Cell Disease Association of Illinois which is based in Chicago.

This organization has as its primary mission to improve the quality of life of individuals with Sickle Cell Disease and their families through case coordination, advocacy, and statewide training.

Illinois State University & DCFS

By Dr. Doris Houston

Illinois State University (ISU) in partnership with Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (IDCFS) is on a mission to enhance the well-being and life outcomes of DCFS-involved youth by improving their access to higher education. To support these goals, the Center for Adoption Studies at ISU received a \$50,000 Spencer Foundation grant to better understand the social, emotional and academic needs and talents of DCFS youth who attend college. The grant, titled “Higher Education as the Lifeline to Social Mobility for Former Foster Youth,” is part of the Spencer Foundation’s “Education and Social Opportunities Initiative”.

The statewide study, led by Drs. Doris M. Houston and Christopher Gjesfeld, emerged as a priority issue stemming from the Illinois Permanency Enhancement Project (PEP). During the 2014 annual

AAAC/PEP joint conference hosted at ISU, foster alumni panelists spoke to their need for increased educational support and access to higher education resources. Currently, foster alumni have little or no access to campus-based programs that help them adjust to the social, emotional and academic demands of higher education as they transition from care. As a result of these and other educational access barriers, close to 90% of youth from foster care never complete a college program or obtain a degree.¹

“While DCFS is expected to provide support and resources to youth in care who attend college, institutions of higher education have an equal responsibility to ensure that foster alumni who attend college have what they need to succeed” said Houston. “This work lays the groundwork for Illinois institutions of higher education to better serve and retain this under-served population of

young adults who have overcome life obstacles including abuse, neglect and family disruption”. Dr. Houston further states “Many students have the drive to make it to college with little or no support system from home. Nevertheless, they are smart, talented and exceptionally resilient. We want to understand how their strengths can be nourished on campuses” said Houston.

The study was designed in partnership with the DCFS Office of Education and Transitional Services and with the support of NIU’s Education Access Project. Findings and recommendations will be used to guide the development of programs geared toward increasing college admissions and improving retention rates among foster alumni in Illinois. Preliminary results from the survey could be ready as early as the spring of 2016.
–Houston, Doris 2015

¹Courtney, M., Dworsky, A., Cusick, G., Havicek, J., Perez, A., & Keller, T. (2007). *Executive summary: Midwest evaluation of adult functioning of former foster youth: Outcomes at age 21.*

Remembering 2015



Remembering 2015



2015 AAAC Annual Conference Awardees

In addition to recognizing selected staff from nominations, it was decided to also give awards to the conference workshop presenters. We wanted to show appreciation for the presenters taking time to prepare their workshops and especially for giving up their Saturday to support the conference. After all, workshop presenters and speakers are at the core of having a successful event with the provision of engaging, informative and innovative topics. The workshop presenters were:



Donald Adams

Current Position:
DCFS Contracted Employee
Training and Development
Specialist with Governors State
University



Angela Baron-Jeffrey

Current Position:
Director, Northern Illinois University
Center for Child Welfare and the
Educational Access Project
for DCFS



Robert Blackwell

Current Position:
DCFS Racial Equity
Practice Liaison



Dr. Venessa Brown

Current Position:
Associate Chancellor, Office of
Institutional Diversity and
Inclusion, Southern Illinois
University Edwardsville



Dr. Anthony Grady

Current Position:
AAAC Member and DCFS
Cook South Clinical Manager



Kim R. Greene

Current Position:
Resource Coordinator,
Metropolitan Family Services,
Calumet site



Dr. Doris M. Houston

Current Position:
Associate Director, Center for
Adoptions Studies and Associate
Director, Illinois State University



Verleaner Lane

Current Position:
DCFS Contracted Employee,
Training Development Specialist
with Governors State University



Oronde Miller

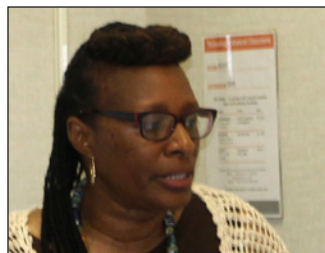
Current Position:
Executive Director and Founder,
Institute for Family and Child
Well-Being

2015 AAAC Annual Conference Awardees *(Continued)*



Cynthia Richter-Jackson

Current Position:
DCFS Deputy Director,
Quality Assurance



Dr. Terry Solomon

Current Position:
Founding Executive Director,
African American Family
Research Institute

2015 African American Outstanding Achievement Award



Shirley Davis-Barsh

Current Position:
DCFS Public Service
Administrator



Michael C. Jones

Current Position:
Senior Public Service
Administrator



Maurice Johnson

Current Position:
Child Protection
Advanced Specialist,
Operations



Chris Willis

Current Position:
Child Welfare
Advanced Specialist,
Operations

2015 Notable Retirees

Carmen Alvarez
Marilyn Arnold
Gloria Bell
Bennie Bullock
Barbara Burnett
Kathleen Clark
Carolyn Cross
Dorothy Elligan
Marilyn Giles
Nora Green

Galette Grogan
Belinda Hines
Carrie Jones
Annie Jones
Lynne Lanier
Gerald Leftwich
Ellen Long
Valerie McDaniels
Cheryl McIntire
JoAudrey Miller

Francisco Navarro
Deborah Palmer
Fred Pennix
Earl Pleasant
Ora Pleasant
Deborah Smith
Sherlyn Smith
Lorraine Swanigan
Jimmie Whitelow
Michael Wonderlich

DCFS OFFICE OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION (OAA) - EEO

The Office of Affirmative Action is located at
1911-21 S. Indiana Chicago, IL 60616
(312) 328-2493

OAA is charged with the overall responsibility of ensuring that the Department complies with EEO civil rights rules and regulations and that the rights of all DCFS employees, applicants, and service providers are protected against unlawful discrimination. Unlawful Areas of Discrimination include the following:

- Race
- Color
- Sex Sexual Orientation
- Sexual Harassment
- Religion
- Age
- National Origin
- Physical or Mental Disability
- Military Discharge (unfavorable)
- Marital Status
- Citizenship Status
- Arrest Record
- Aiding and Abetting
- Coercion
- Veteran's Status

AFRICAN AMERICAN SERVICES

The African-American Services Chief advises the Office of Affirmative Action, Deputy Director, and DCFS on matters regarding service delivery to African-American staff, clients, and provider agencies. The Chief of African-American Services also evaluates DCFS policies and procedures to ensure that they are culturally sensitive and makes recommendations about how to remedy issues which adversely impact the staff and African-American community.

The Chief of African-American Services examines complaints from staff and clients alleging disparities, of services or service delivery to African-American clients and provider agencies. Provides information on career development for African-American staff and potential employees and external resources for foster/adoptive parents through a variety of culturally sensitive programs.

The Chief of African-American Services advocates for African-American children and families involved with DCFS and community agencies which contract with DCFS by participating in the development and implementation of corrective action for "at risk" agencies. The Chief of African-American Services also serves as liaison

and provides technical assistance to the African- American Advisory Council, African American Employment Plan Committee, Transformation and Action Teams and Birth Parents' Steering Committee and the Diversity and Recruitment Committee.

The Chief of African-American Services engages in external community outreach and serves as a resource for community-based groups and other stakeholders, inclusive of examining trainings and workshops on the unique cultural and programmatic needs of African-American staff, children and families; advocates for staff and families provides input and recommendation on informational community forums on DCFS initiatives, procedures, policy changes, and other DCFS programs which focus on children and families. She assists other DCFS Division staff in the recruitment of African-American employees and the development of community forums and culturally sensitive services in conjunction with sharing information regarding the interpretation and application of DCFS rules, procedures and policies relating to EEO and the Departments' Affirmative Action Plan.



African American Advisory Council Members

OFFICERS:

Michael Burns, Chairman
Tracy Marshall, Vice Chair
Lori Welcher-Evans, Secretary

MEMBERS:

Robin Albritton
Bremen Campbell
Michelle Carter
Fayette Coleman-Gill
Diane Cottrell
Cheryl Dampeer
Shirley Davis-Barsh
Millie Donelson
Carole Freeman
Dr. Anthony Grady
Veronica Gray-Mattison
Angela Hassell
Renee Heard
Jacqueline Johnson
Rhonda Laye
Kilonzo Musau
James Robinson
Jataun Rollins
Keith D. Smith
Audrey Sneed-Morton
Relunda Washington

Ex-Officio:

Jere Moore

African American Services:

Rochelle Crump

Rev. 3/4/16

Standing Committees

MEMBERSHIP

Chairperson: Diane Cottrell

The African-American Advisory Council's By-Laws stipulate a membership consisting of a maximum of thirty-one (31) department employees. The Council is a statewide organization. Seventy-two percent of the members are from Cook County and twenty eight percent are from the remaining three regions, this formula reflects the proportion of African Americans within Cook and downstate.

African-American Advisory Council members are, at this point, African American staff that was selected based on their expressed interest and willingness to work for African American issues in the Department. Employees may become members after two years of employment and submitting a brief narrative noting their interests in problems and issues affecting African Americans to the membership chair.

The Membership Committee meets periodically to review applications upon receipt. The committee prepares recommendations for selection by vote of council members at the next regular meeting.

CONFERENCE

Chairpersons: Robin Albritton and Tracy Marshall

This committee plans the annual conference. Committee members develop the theme, workshops and presenters in addition to identifying keynote speakers.

NEWSLETTER

Chairperson: Bremen Campbell

The newsletter is a quarterly publication of articles submitted by Council members or agency staff. Each quarterly edition presents information about how staff can better provide services using new policies and protocols, reflect judicial rulings, and effectively implement new legislation. Our Editorial Board reviews draft articles for professional content and relevancy to current events around the six regions.

Sections of the newsletter include: viewpoint, book review, and resource identification. Those interested can submit articles to chairperson of the newsletter committee:

Bremen Campbell,
15115 Dixie Hwy., Harvey, IL 60426

LEGISLATIVE

Chairperson: Jere Moore

The objective of this committee is to monitor General Assembly Legislation affecting African Americans and child welfare programs. Members also confer with legislators and the Director's Legislative Liaison. The Chair may designate AD HOC committees, as needed which may include staff who are not members of the Advisory Council.

TRAINING

Chairperson: James Robinson

This committee was established to present information regarding the Council to new employees during the Department's foundation training.

AD HOC COMMITTEES

The AAAC Chair recommends formation of Ad Hoc Committees when key issues are brought to the council's attention.

“Keeping Our Children First”



MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the African American Advisory Council is to advise and make specific recommendations with solutions to the Director and Bureau Deputies concerning the Department’s provision of services to African American clients, staff and its contractual service providers in the following areas: recruitment, legislation, employment, community relations and development of professional issues.

Interested in Joining AAAC?

Contact Diane Cottrell,
membership chairperson

email: Diane.Cottrell@illinois.gov

708.210.3716



www.DCFS.illinois.gov

